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## EUGENE FIELD.

When Mr. Field died on November 4th, 1895, in the zenith of his literary power, for he was then but forty-five, the journalistic commonplace was that American men of letters had lost their Yorick. There is a truth in this, as there is in most commonplaces, but I feel that an attentive study of his work will show that he was at the time of his death more than "a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy," and that he was becoming something far deeper and more significant than the Yorick of Shakespere or of Sterne. His work is certainly very uneven, much of it even to the last bearing traces of the copy-boy nudging the elbow of the young journalist. But at its best it is so good, it has such a sparkle of Helicon, such *bonhomie*, such winsome gentle grace, that he is sure of a place in the hearts of those who know, and I think in the evolution of our literature also.

On his life it is not necessary to dwell. Born in Saint Louis, of Vermont stock and educated, as many of his poems testify, in New England, he went to the West after his father's death, 1869, spent two years at the Missouri State University, and then used his entire inheritance, some sixty thousand dollars, in purchasing experience of a rich and varied life in Europe. Returning penniless he found a congenial livelihood in journalism, and as he rose in his profession, which he never wholly abandoned, he moved to Chicago, of which he was a citizen cherished by all the gently nurtured at the time of his sudden yet not altogether unanticipated death. Of his writing it is possible for me to notice only his books, though these do not embrace all of his work, nor even all of it that is in its kind admirable. These books, all now published by the Messrs. Scribner, are eleven in number,<sup>1</sup> though the contents of three is in part

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<sup>1</sup> They are, in prose: "A Little Book of Profitable Tales," 1889; "The Holy Cross and Other Tales," 1893; "The House," 1896; "Second Book of Tales," 1896; "Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac," 1896. In verse: "A Little

repeated in others. The first dates from 1889, and only five were published before his death, nor were these his best; so that his just meed of praise can be but tardy justice. I purpose here to examine the development of his talent first in prose, then in the higher literary walk.

The "Profitable Tales" shows a protean but immature talent. These twenty-one stories are dated from 1884 to 1889, and if we examine them chronologically we shall find that all but one of the stories of the first three years, eleven out of twelve, are romantic fancies in the style of Andersen, but without quite catching that author's studied simplicity of diction, so that one is occasionally disturbed at a jarring word or thought. Thus, at the very first, he showed the childlike mind that was to make him almost too widely known as a writer for children, to the prejudice of his other talents. But the later efforts in this vein, for instance "The Mouse and the Moon-Beam," (1888) show a finer mastery in setting off the real against the ideal with little touches of humor and irony that have a most dainty charm. And to this kindly humor "Margaret, a Pearl" adds a pathos at once strong and tender. The author's humor seeks a vent also in dialect stories of New England or the west, sometimes mere bits of grotesque fooling, sometimes quaintly pathetic, but always suffering from the inevitable limitations of this unfortunately popular *genre*. In this dialect work Mr. Field fell in with, it might be unjust to say pandered to, the depraved taste of the time, and his scholarly instinct led him to similar experiments in old English and in Scotch, both in prose and verse, with what seems to me an unfortunately misapplied ingenuity. At least it does not appear that any of this dialectic prose is, as the French say, *viable*, unless perhaps it be "The Yaller Baby" of 1888, though this may offend a squeamish taste. But whether his work is in English or in that language that never was on sea or

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Book of Western Verse," 1889; "Second Book of Verse," 1892; "Echoes from the Sabine Farm," 1892; "Songs and Other Verses," 1896; "With Trumpet and Drum," 1896; "Love Songs of Childhood," 1896.

land called dialect, it is clear that on the whole, during these six years, sentiment and *mignardise* were yielding in Mr. Field's mind to robust humor and the truer pathos of common life. If we read chronologically we feel that we are gradually rising from the conversation of violets and lap-dogs into the light of common day and rational existence.

The "Second Book of Tales" affords no such bibliographical help in tracing the development of Mr. Field's talent. Only the first piece bears a date (1888) and is thus associated in its dialect with three others of the same year. Intrinsic reasons would lead one to assign to the others a later date. They continue the former styles but they improve on them. None of the earlier "Wonder Tales" are equal in finish to "Sweet-One-Darling" or the "Moon Garden," and there is much ethical power in "The Talisman," though one feels still an occasional discord between the subject and the style which in this *genre* should aim at limpid simplicity.

Several of these legends touch domestic life for which to the last Mr. Field had an exquisite sensitiveness akin to that of Coppée. His first essays in this field show at times a strained sentiment that in "A Child's Letter" and in "Samuel Cowles and his Horse Royal" degenerates into sentimentality, but "Mr. and Mrs. Blossom" and "The Jinin' Farms" are true in their pathos and introduce a manner that he cultivated later with still greater success. "George's Birthday" is an exceedingly realistic bit of colonial life that acquires a purely adventitious point by its introduction of the family and neighbors of the infant Washington. The longest story in the volume, "The Wooing of Miss Woppit" is probably the best in spite of its improbable plot. It contains several keen studies of mining camp psychology. Mr. Field has caught admirably the gentler side of these rough diamonds, and shows them to us with a kindly humor that is often charming. Three-fingered Hoover, who had figured already in Mr. Field's verses, the dapper and talkative Barber Sam and the poetic Dodsley are

an admirable trio of chivalrous rivals, and the melodrama of the denouement is redeemed by its pathos. It is a pity that Mr. Field did not more often allow himself such a generous canvas for the more subtle analysis of character.

The close of this volume is taken up with eight bits of journalistic *blague*, in an earlier manner. These leaves from "Culture's Garland" though they occasionally transgress the bounds of good taste in their exhibition of the comic side of the aspiration for culture that always comes with new wealth, have in them a deal of healthy humor, and it is well that they should be preserved as illustrations of that boisterous bubbling spirit of breezy fun that had already voiced itself in the now almost unpurchasable "Denver Primer."

A third volume of stories "The Holy Cross and other Tales," some of which precede in composition those we have been considering, was published in 1893. But while it continues all the manners of the "Tales" it marks an advance in art in each of them and so is fitly considered last among these volumes of brief fiction. Here as there the legend, the story of or for children is most prominent, but the style is better sustained. "Joel's Talk with Santa Claus" is redolent of New England Christmas cheer and "The Lonesome Little Shoe" seems to me quite the best thing in Andersen's style that we have in English, even without the delightful verses of its Fairy Operetta, with its gruesome "Ballad of the Jelly-Cake" without which no nursery is complete, and this exquisite lullaby for which alone there is space here :

Sweet little fairy,  
Tender and airy,  
Come let us dance on the good baby-eyes.  
Merrily skipping,  
Cheerily tripping,  
Murmur we ever our soft lullabies.

But of lullabies Mr. Field gives us a feast in his poems whose infinite variety age cannot stale nor custom change, and we must still keep our studious eyes on the path of prose. For this volume contains in "Mistress Merciless "

a father's meditation on a dead child that is exquisite in the delicacy of its pathetic touches and here, too, are dainty bits of Hawaiian and Orkney folk-lore, with a not unworthy modernization of Faust and a strongly handled legend of Holy Cross Mountain. But what seems most noteworthy is the growth of the frankly humorous vein, sometimes verging on the grotesque, but oftener quaintly naturalistic and with a little *sauce piquante* of mockery. Interesting, too, is the first expression, at least in prose, of the bibliomania that was to form the subject of his last and best work.

On the whole then when compared with the first and with the greater part of the "Second Book of Tales," there is growing strength, though the style shows occasional affectation that quite disappears from the two volumes of prose that follow. And it may not be amiss to note here a few other little slips which suggest that Mr. Field's familiarity with Horace did not extend to the philology of modern tongues. "Yseult" is not a Saxon name, nor is "Hulda" a German one; "Ste." is not an English abbreviation; *apparata* is not the plural of *apparatus*, as is here more than once alleged; and "which words had like to wrought" is not English.<sup>1</sup> Even the love affairs of a Bibliomaniac contains the dubious "I had travelled none," and here to the very last we have an alleged Chaucerian English that never was the English of any time or people, and surely never will be.<sup>2</sup> Some of the poems show also little errors that I will note here and have done with them. *Comme bien* is not French, *fuhr nein* and *auf der Rhine* are not German, yet these monstrosities occur repeatedly in a single piece. I can discover no wit or purpose in these errors or in others scattered through all the volumes.<sup>3</sup> But why look for motes in a sunbeam.

Two volumes of prose were left unfinished at Mr. Field's

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<sup>1</sup> See Second Book of Tales, pp. 243, 248, 260, etc.; Holy Cross, p. 237, and 14.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 47 and 61.

<sup>3</sup> Songs and other Verses, pp. 56-7.

death, but they are of quite unequal value. "The House" is a rather grotesque account of the experiences of a most naïvely unpractical couple in purchasing and then altering a house to their minds, so far as they had any minds. Though incomplete, the book is quite long enough, for these multitudinous mischances cannot but pall on the reader who feels that they are due to an unpractical incapacity that begins by being amusing but ends by arousing a contemptuous exasperation. Not as though the humor were not sustained throughout, but the conception is too slight for a volume, and so Mr. Field has had here much the experience of Mr. Bunner with "The Runaway Browns," though this book lacks the variety of scene and incident that saves the other from a grinding monotony. It is pleasant, therefore, to be able to turn from "The House" to "The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac," which with the Horatian poems is Mr. Field's best monument.

This book, fascinating to every lover of books, is a dainty collection of recollections and reflections of a genial scholar. He tells us of his childhood nursed on the "New England Primer," and so at the very outset he establishes a bond of sympathy with his reviewer, who also learned to fly sin and pride with Timothy and Vashti, and conned with serious eyes the colloquy of the Youth with Christ and the Devil, as he sat before the brass andirons and the glowing embers. Then Mr. Field's hero, in whom surely we may see himself, made the acquaintance of Crusoe, after which he pays a feeling tribute to the German *Märchen*, those true wild-flowers of fancy, from which as well as from Andersen Mr. Field must have drawn much of his own inspiration. Then, after dwelling fondly on these first loves, our bibliomaniac launches *in medias res* and lets his pen trot, "as fate or fancy carries." He discourses delightfully of Reading in Bed, a practice advocated by Cicero, and the delight of all true bibliomaniacs, so long as books and beds shall endure. Then he tells us of Fender-Fishing, of Baldness and Intellectuality and of Extra-illustrating; but I would not copy

the Contents and the whole book is a perpetual feast of nectared sweets, so genial, so catholic spirited, so full of the modest simplicity of true culture, that it leaves the mind aromatic with its rare perfume.

Like Elia our Bibliomaniac pursues no plan. His loves do not beget one another. They are, as Jean Paul would have said, simultaneous loves with no touch of jealousy. He will forgive even extra-illustration, that strange vagary of bibliomania, because he is sure that this erring path must lead to conversion and repentance, over which the faithful shall rejoice more than over the ninety and nine who did not wander because they never started from the philistine goal. If we will but love books we may love them as we will and still be of this genial bibliomaniac's company. Enough, in those dear words of the New England Primer, that we all unite in the aspiration: "My book and heart Must never part."

It is hardly possible to criticize systematically a book like this which must be caviare to the general reader just because it is caviare to the epicurean. We of the guild, though but catechumens, cannot treat these sweet confessions as mere literature. He has touched our hearts and *Amor omnia vincit*. Here is a domain where only gentle spirits will feel at home. But how all such will respond to that affectionate tribute to the men of old time, the de Burys and the Alcuins, words which Mr. Field wrote but two days before what must have been a happy death, for none could have such thoughts without a sunny, happy heart. How fondly we linger over "The odors that my books exhale," we over whom the fragrance of old leather and paper yellow with age has a sort of intoxicating power, as though it were indeed "a beaker full of the warm south, Full of the true the blushful Hippocrene," to transport us to an elysium where we bibliomaniacs shall read forever on beds of asphodel. And then who among us does not respond to the catholic, broad-breasted sympathy that proclaims its joy in Villon and Boccaccio, and witnesses that good confession

with no sniggering smirk of hypocrisy, knowing that whatsoever has the touch of art is beautiful and that the Creator testified of all nature that it was very good. Alas, that it should take courage in this cant-sicklied age to voice the feeling of scholars as Mr. Field has done so truly, so honestly and so gracefully in "My Romance with Fiametta" and in "When Fanchette Bewitched Me." Here is the cry of the children of nature struggling to free themselves from mediaeval chrism-bands and the disembodied morals of puritanism.

I will not leave this last and best gift of Mr. Field to us without calling attention to the poetry that lurks in it, not merely the poetry of sentiment that transfuses all, but the tripping little measures in which the bibliomaniac's *fidus Achates* is wont on occasion to sing his heart's delight. Charming are the verses to Boccaccio and to Villon and those on Marcus Varro and on the extra-illustrators. All of these are too long for citation, but no bibliomaniac would pass over in silence, or with any words but Mr. Field's own, some stanzas of the "Odors which my books exhale":

My garden abounds in pleasant nooks,  
And fragrance is over it all,  
For sweet is the smell of my old, old books  
In their places against the wall.  
Here's a folio that's grim with age  
And yellow and green with mold;  
There's a breath of the sea on every page  
And the hint of a staunch ship's hold.  
And here is a treasure from France la belle  
Exhaleth a faint perfume  
Of wedded lily and asphodel  
In a garden of song abloom.  
And this wee little book of Puritan mien  
And rude conspicuous print  
Hath the Yankee flavor of wintergreen  
Or, may be, of peppermint.  
But best beloved of books, I ween,  
Are those which one perceives  
Are hallowed by ashes dropped between  
The yellow, well-thumbed leaves.

Come pluck with me in my garden nook  
 The posies that bloom for all.  
 Oh, sweet is the scent of my old, old books  
 In their places against the wall.

And so we are brought to that part of Mr. Field's work by which he first won regard and by which he will continue to be most widely known, his six volumes of verse. Of these the first, "A Little Book of Western Verse," appeared in the same year as the first Book of Tales and has very similar characteristics; for its sixty-seven pieces fall naturally into the three categories, childlife, poems of the west and in dialect, and verses that show scholarly aspiration, translations and adaptations from the Latin, the French and German and futile toyings with the language of Chaucer and Burns, of which the misapplied ingenuity has been already characterized in speaking of Mr. Field's early prose. A few poems deal with domestic life, a few are serious or religious. But both these minor categories have often a little perfunctory air, as though the verses were written to order for some solemnity or festival.

The strongest impression made by this volume as a whole is produced by the *genre* pictures of childlife and the exquisite series of lullabies. The sentiment of paternity is seldom found so all pervading in literature. It is almost always as mother that he thinks of the wife. Occasionally the pathos of childhood yields to the quaint, playful *blague* that gives much of the later work a peculiar zest. The earliest piece in the volume, dated 1880, is a *tour de force* quite unique in its childlike callousness of feeling and wooden iteration of rhyme. This will serve to show this key :

A little peach in the orchard grew,  
 A little peach of emerald hue,  
 Warmed by the sun and wet with the dew,  
 It grew.

(Seeing this Johnny and Sue threw a stick at it and having secured their prize) :

John took a bite and Sue took a chew  
 And then the trouble began to brew,  
 Trouble the doctor couldn't subdue,  
 Too true.

Under the turf where the daisies grew  
 They planted John and his sister Sue  
 And their little souls to the angels flew.  
 Boo hoo!

What of the peach of the emerald hue,  
 Warmed by the sun and wet with the dew?  
 Ah well! its mission on earth is through.  
 Adieu.

Then there is a group of poems that deal with mining life at the Red Hoss Mountain camp, afterward to be the scene of the "Wooing of Miss Woppit," and introducing several of the characters in that story. Most of these, as of the poems dealing with western journalism, are in dialect and full of the racy spirit of what was the far west in the decade that followed the war, and if perhaps none of them are steps to literary immortality one would be sorry to miss such characteristic bits as either "Mr. Dana of the New York Sun" or "The Conversazzhyony". But far the most interesting group of poems in this first volume are those that show the scholar behind the professional furnisher of copy. Though here one must make a broad distinction between the poems written in the king's English and those written in an imaginary antique language, whose bright bits of fun depend almost entirely on the ludicrous incongruity of modern modes of thought and speech with ancient modes of life and expression, of which this may serve as a sufficient specimen:

But such an eye ye widdow hath — an hongrey eye and wan,  
 That spyeth for anoder chaunce whereby she may catch on;  
 An eye that winketh of itself and sayeth by that winke  
 Ye which a maiden sholde not knowe nor never even thinke;  
 Which winke ben more exceeding swift nor human thought ben thunk  
 And leaveth doubting if so be that winke ben really wunk.<sup>1</sup>

This, like Mr. Bunner's "Love in Old Cloathes," is surely an error of humor, an appeal to a lower taste by one who was quite able to charm in a higher vein as we may see by the adaptations from the French and German poets, and most of all by those from Horace, all afterward incor-

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<sup>1</sup> A Proper Trewe Idyl of Camelot, p. 137.

porated in the "Echoes from the Sabine Farm," of which I will speak presently. The spirit in which this work is done is delightfully caught in "The Truth about Horace," where those who do not already know the lines by heart may read how:

It's very aggravating  
To hear the solemn prating  
Of the fossils who are stating  
    That old Horace was a prude.  
When we know that with the ladies  
He was always raising Hades  
And with many an escapade his  
    Best productions are imbued.

There's really not much harm in a  
Large number of his carmina  
But these people find alarm in a  
    Few records of his acts  
So they'd squelch the muse caloric  
And to students sophomoric  
They'd present as metaphoric  
    What old Horace meant for facts.

We have always thought 'em lazy  
Now we adjudge 'em crazy  
Why Horace was a daisy  
    That was very much alive.  
And the wisest of us know him  
As his Lydia verses show him —  
Go read that virile poem,  
    It is No. 25.

He was a very owl, sir,  
And starting out to prow! sir,  
You bet, he made Rome howl, sir,  
    Until he filled his date;  
With a massic-laden ditty  
And a classic maiden pretty  
He painted up the city  
    And Maecenas paid the freight.

Other precious reminiscences of the joy of young student life are the lines "To a Soubrette" and the song "In Flanders," while the man of riper culture appears in the ballads of Yvetot and Robin Hood and the book-lover in "The Bibliomaniac's Bride," "De Amicitiiis" and "The Biblioma-

niac's Prayer," in the last of which occur these delightful lines :

But if, Oh Lord, it pleaseth Thee  
 To keep me in temptation's way,  
 I humbly ask that I may be  
 Most notably beset to-day.  
 Let my temptation be a book,  
 Which I shall purchase, hold and keep,  
 Whereon, when other men shall look  
 They 'll wail to know I got it cheap.

These and many verses "equally as good" will embalm this book as surely in the memories of all bookmen as cedria did the manuscripts in old Numa's tomb.

The "Second Book of Verses" and the final "Songs and Other Verses" show no marked advance in technique or in intensity of lyric feeling, and their subjects fall naturally into the same general categories, but the change in their relative prominence is interesting. The bastard antique and Scotch gradually disappear and there is a natural subsidence of dialectic and far western pieces. The poems of childhood also claim less space, but only because these were collected elsewhere. On the other hand the adaptations from French and German increase, Greek is also drawn upon, while the interest in Horace has now justified a separate volume. This was doubtless due in part to European travel, which finds an echo in several serious, fanciful and satiric pieces. Then there are tributes to the literary friendships that his genial wit had won, and with them comes a greater richness in the epicurean vein of poems dedicated to good cheer, whether of the homely doughnut and cruller sort or of the sybaritic and convivial character. Domestic life, in Coppée's manner, the joys and sorrows of the family and of healthy commonplace loves come first into prominence in the last volume, and here too is a noteworthy increase in the serious and quasi-religious pieces. Most of these have indeed no great depth of thought or even of feeling, and though most have a facile flow of words a few are distinctly bad, so that it is hard to

avoid the suspicion here, too, that these were done to order and like several of the occasional festival pieces have lost their spirit with the occasion that evoked them. This leads to the question whether Mr. Field's poetic fame may not suffer from the amount of his production. It is reported that an anthology of his poems is contemplated, and I think it would be possible to cull some fifty of them that should represent quite completely both his poetic talent and his tact so far at least as these volumes show them, though, of course, we know that there were phases of Mr. Field's poetic activity, and those not the least admirable in their kind, of which his collected works take no heed. Surely the little bark of his memory would float the longer and the lighter for being eased of its over-ballasting. Such an anthology might bear the pretty dedication to his wife from the "Second Book" and for the other keys of his domestic verse "Grandma's Bombazine" for its quaintness, "Always Right" for the sly humor of its close, "Gettin' On" for its exquisite pathos of old age and "The Doings of Delsarte" for its frank humor, would claim a place. Then one would add that little conjugal cameo "Suppose" and the rollicking "Ballad of the Taylor Pup," admirable for its effervescent fun. Then for romantic love one might be content with "Mysterious Doings," "Jennie," and "Pan Liveth;" for bubbling juvenile spirit "The Limitations of Youth" and "The Two Skeezecks" might suffice; and for graceful child-like fancies "Pittypat and Tippytoe," "The Sugar-plum Tree" and "The Bow-leg Boy."<sup>1</sup> In the religious and serious vein Mr. Field would be adequately represented by "The Star in the East," "Contentment" and the "Christmas Hymn."<sup>2</sup> For the epicurean vein one would choose "Gosling Stew," "The Bottle and the Bird," "The Onion Tart," and "Rare Roast Beef;"<sup>3</sup> while the untamed western spirit would find

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<sup>1</sup> Second Book, 103, 120, 197, 233, 242, 254; Songs, 13, 14, 90, 93, 119, 123, 159, 173.

<sup>2</sup> Songs, 55, 161, 192.

<sup>3</sup> Second Book, 9, 91, 193, 203.

a sufficient voice in "Red " and "The Red, Red West," and its generous magnanimity and overflowing manliness in "Mojesky as Cameel." <sup>1</sup>

Then there is the side of Mr. Field's work of which the aroma will linger longest and most affectionately in our memories, poems that bespeak the traveller and the scholar, the lover of quaint and beautiful books and bric-a-brac. Of the adaptations from modern poets Heine's "Love Song" might suffice, and of the bits of travel the amusing chauvinism of "Stoves and Sunshine," the grotesque "Schnellest Zug" and the rather facile "Café Molineau" will give a taste of his quality. But from the man of culture we shall ask not alone a generous basket of flowers and fruit from the Sabine Farm, but also such beneficent morsels as "Catullus to Lesbia," "Lydia Dick," "Dibdin's Ghost," "In New Orleans" and "The Discreet Collector." Then "Guess" will voice for us the revolt of sanity from the dictation of linguistic pedants, and "The Stoddards," a warm tribute to the blessed tie that binds all men of gentle heart together, will bind all its readers in spirit to this apostle of the humanities, showing to a materialistic age the more excellent way.<sup>1</sup>

If now to these thirty-four pieces we add some ten from the Western Verses<sup>2</sup> and a generous half-dozen of Eugene Field's forty-one poems in the "Echoes from a Sabine Farm" we shall have a little book which those, who of such delights can judge and spare to interpose them oft, would surely make their *vade mecum*. Here would be the heart of his pantagrulism, and perhaps there is no savor that the culture of America more needs than this. Many would indeed still desire to follow him into the nursery or the playground where his dainty children love or sport "with trumpet and drum," others might rejoice to ramble further with the sheperdesses or linger later over the Sabine massic cups.

<sup>1</sup> Second Book, 51, 122, 162.

<sup>2</sup> Songs, 31, 56, 71, 77, 84, 104, 162; Second Book, 12, 72, 83, 225, 245.

<sup>3</sup> One might add to those already mentioned "Apple Pie and Cheese" and "Our Lady of the Mine."

The former will find in "The Love Songs of Childhood" the verses that welled naturally from Mr. Field's genial heart but which he would not suffer to usurp a predominant place among poems of another character. But, as we have seen, some poems of childhood were admitted into all the volumes and from these "With Trumpet and Drum" is essentially an anthology with seventeen other pieces originally contributed to periodicals. I do not know who in recent years has thrown into winning verse so much sympathy with childhood, and doubtless this has seemed to many the most distinctive mark of Mr. Field's whole production. But in the mass of this juvenile work I find no lyric of the first class, none to which, I think, Mr. Palgrave would give a place in his "Children's Treasury." The poems, for the greater part, appeal less to children than to those who love them. They bear witness to Mr. Field's kindness of heart and sweetness of mind, and they may evoke and foster similar feelings in uncritical parental breasts. Farther than this a judicious critic will hardly care to go, but this is already much.

And now *Procul adeste profani*, but ye who know and love your Horace and that for which Horace stands in ethics and in life, listen to these echoes of that Worldly-Wise-man's songs:

Hark you from yonder Sabine farm  
 Echo the songs of long ago,  
 With power to soothe and grace to charm  
 What ills humanity may know,  
 With that sweet music in the air  
 'Tis Love and Summer everywhere.

More than a third of these Echoes are the work of Roswell Martin Field, the poet's brother, whose alleged guilelessness is amusingly commended to the care of a common friend in the introduction and at the close. Eugene's work is usually easier in its flow and closer to the original, though the versification of both is very happy. Perhaps the best bit of polished translation is "To the Fountain of Bandusia," but our interest is naturally rather in the transfusion of an-

cient thought into modern dress. Compare, for instance, these lines with the last eight of the ninth ode of the first book of Horace:

Let's steal away from winter's wrath  
 And glory in the artful theft,  
 That, years from now, folks shall allow  
 'T was cold indeed when we got left.  
 So where the whisperings and the mirth  
 Of girls invite a sportive chap,  
 Let's fare awhile — Aha — You smile,  
 You guess my meaning. *Verbum sap.*<sup>1</sup>

Or again, how can a modern Horatian render the last lines of the *Carpe diem* better than thus:

The wisest thing for you to do is to embark this diem  
 Upon a merry escapade with such a bard as I am  
 And while we sport I'll reel you off such odes as shall surprise ye.  
 Tomorrow when the headache comes — why then I'll satirize ye.

Or again compare the latter half of IV. 10 with this:

When you behold  
 Yourself grown old  
 These words shall speak your spirit moody:  
 Unhappy one! What heaps of fun  
 I've missed by being goody-goody.  
 Oh that I might have felt the hunger  
 Of loveless age when I was younger.

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<sup>1</sup> Horace had said:

Donec virenti canities abest  
 Morosa, nunc et campus et areae  
 Lenaeque sub noctem susurri  
 Composita repetantur hora  
 Nunc et latentis proditor intimo  
 Gratus puellae risus ab angulo  
 Pignusque dereptum lacertis  
 Aut digito male pertinaci.

Horatians may like to see a list of the odes and passages treated. They are: Odes I. 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 18, 20, 22, 23 (5 versions), 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 35, 38; II. 3, 7, 11, 30; III. 9, 13, 21, 26, 29, 30; IV. II; Epod. 6, 14 (partly twice); Ars poet., passages beginning at lines 1, 301, 323. Roswell's contributions include Odes I. 1, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 14, 19, 23, 25, 33; II. 4, 5, 8, 14; III. 9, 12, 13, 15, 22; IV. 10, 11, 13; Epod. 3, 14; Epist. I. 20 and "At the Ball Game," quizzically referred to "Ode V. 17."

Or again see how in I. 5 the version in spite of its apparent freedom is in part as close to the words as to the spirit :

What perfumed, posie-dizzined sirrah  
     With smiles for diet  
 Clasps you, O fair but faithless Pyrrha,  
     On the quiet.

. . . . .

Pyrrha, your love's a treacherous ocean,  
     He'll soon fall in there,  
 Then I shall gloat on his commotion,  
     For I have been there.

Here the first lines are almost literal, the last a very free paraphrase, and yet the sense and sentiment is better conveyed to the modern mind than by any erudite comment on the *tabula votiva*. But occasionally the translator takes decided liberties with the amiable *Lauriger*. Still Horace could not but have smiled over the turn given to the last line of I. 30 :

Venus, dear Cnidian-Paphian queen,  
 Desert that Cyprus way off yonder,  
 And fare you hence where with incense  
     My Glycera would have you fonder ;  
 And to your joy bring hence your boy,  
     The Graces with unbelted laughter,  
 The Nymphs and Youth,—then, then in sooth,  
     Should Mercury come tagging after.

And then—but no, all good things must have an end. This is a book to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest ; therefore it is a book to own, with a fair copy of “The Truth about Horace” inserted as an “extra-illustration” in gentle pity for those who do not know it by heart.

Surely it is for such work as this rather than for his poems of childhood, surely it is by the scholars rather than by the mothers of the next generation, that Mr. Field's memory will be kept ever green. His lullabies and fairy prattlings may be forgotten, but his graceful bibliomania and these joyous echoes from the Sabine Farm will linger in our minds like that faint smell of musk in the old bureaux. I think he would have wished it so, and that Horace

whom he knew and loved so well, spoke for his translator  
also when he prayed

Latoe, dones ac precor, integra  
Cum mente nec turpem senectam  
Degere nec cithara carentem. (I. 31.)

Apollo heard the prayer and took his poet in the fulness  
of his life to Elysian fields.

BENJAMIN W. WELLS.